

HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting name & Date	COUNCIL 11 November 2020
Agenda item	9
Report title	Interim Position Statement (Sustainability and Climate Change) for use in the determination of planning applications
Report reference no.	Obtain reference number from Democratic Services
Wards affected	C/20/46
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List of Appendices	Appendix A – Report to Executive (EX/20/54) Appendix 1 – Climate Change and Sustainability Interim Planning Policy Position Statement (draft)
Reason for urgency	Not applicable
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Dr Harvey Cohen

PUBLIC REPORT - this report is available to the public.

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1. That the Full Council approves the Climate Change and Sustainability Interim Planning Policy Position Statement attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 2.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019 and is committed to achieving carbon neutrality as soon as possible and no later than 2050. Given the urgent need to ensure the introduction of measures to meet both government and local Climate Change commitments, it is both prudent and necessary to publish a clear position statement to clarify how Hertsmere as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will interpret its existing development plan policies in the context of updated material considerations

and circumstances until the new Local Plan is published and subsequently adopted.

- 2.2 This position statement sets out how Hertsmere as LPA will seek to apply relevant policies set out in the adopted Core Strategy (2013) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) (2016), in the context of the more recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019), Hertsmere Borough Council's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and reflect the Government's recent commitments and emerging priorities on climate change.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. At the time of declaring Climate Emergency, the Council committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions no later than 2050. Whilst the planning process alone cannot achieve this target, part of our commitment will be met by setting standards for new developments in the Borough through the new Local Plan. In the interim, due to the urgent need of climate action, this position statement will encourage and help steer the borough towards sustainable, net zero carbon development by clarifying how existing policies will be interpreted.
- 3.2. Building resilience against the impacts of climate change including extreme weather events such as heat/cold waves, flooding, and drought, requires short term design and technological actions and also long term measures like protecting and enhancing biodiversity, open spaces and greenbelts. Hence, intervention is required without delay.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1. The Council has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions no later than 2050. A delay in acting on reducing emissions and seeking such measures through new development proposals until the Local Plan is adopted will require more radical interventions in the future at a greater cost, and larger impacts on the residents of the Council and society at large.
- 4.2. Legally new planning policies can only be set through Local Plans. Supplementary planning guidance and position statements such as this can only encourage, rather than require, particular actions by setting out clear material planning considerations which support a strengthening of the current policy approach.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1. There is now clear scientific evidence that climate change is happening. The average temperature at the surface of the Earth has risen by about 1°C since pre-industrial period, temperature of the oceans is increasing, polar ice and glaciers is melting, sea levels are rising, and more extreme weather events are being seen around the world.
- 5.2. Recent climate change is largely a result of increased levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases trapping the Sun's energy and causing the Earth to warm.

- 5.3. The increase in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is almost entirely due to human activity including burning of fossil fuels for energy, agriculture and deforestation, and manufacturing of cement, chemicals and metals.
- 5.4. If action is taken to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions now, it may be possible to limit the increase in temperature to 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Doing so will limit the burden we put on future generations, protect our economies and provide wider benefits to health, energy security and biodiversity.
- 5.5. The Council can influence land use, promote sustainable living and development and improve well-being and quality of life of its residents, by imbibing the following principles in all aspects of the development of the Borough:
 - a. reducing consumption,
 - b. minimising waste,
 - c. switching to renewable forms of energy,
 - d. switching to active, public and sustainable forms of transport and reducing the need to travel overall,
 - e. implementing principles of circular economy,
 - f. buying and consuming local produce,
 - g. ensuring sustainable and zero carbon new developments with compensatory improvements to greenbelts,
 - h. protecting and enhancing greenbelts, open spaces and biodiversity,
 - i. and building climate change resilience.
- 5.6. These principles have been agreed in the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and will be implemented through the new Local Plan and the Position Statement in the interim. The new Local Plan is due to be considered by Executive in February 2021 and formally published for comment in mid-May. The new policies it contains can begin to be given weight when considering application from the date of publication and this weight increases the further the plan progresses through the process towards formal adoption.

6. PROGRESS SO FAR

- 6.1. Between the climate emergency declaration on the 18th September 2019 and the present report, the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy for the Borough has been approved.
- 6.2. The Climate Change and Sustainability Policies for the new Local Plan have been drafted by Officers and are going through an internal checking process.

7. FINANCIAL AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Direct funding from the Council, in addition to Officer time, will not be required to implement the policy statement.

- 7.2. Community Infrastructure Levy Funding (CIL) will play an important role in delivering the green infrastructure, alongside the establishment of a carbon offsetting fund where developers, whose schemes are unable to achieve net-zero carbon emissions, will be required to fund off-site activities to reduce emissions.

8. LEGAL POWERS RELIED ON AND ANY LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The Council has the legal power to develop policies and plans intended to mitigate the impacts of the activities of the Council on climate change and to mitigate the effects and impacts of climate change on the Borough.
- 8.2. For the reasons stated in paragraph 4.2 above, the approach set out in the interim position statement cannot legally be an absolute requirement of the Council.

9. EFFICIENCY GAINS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

- 9.1. There may be direct and indirect efficiency gains from the adoption of these policies in department such as reduced Officer time on new development applications.
- 9.2. Adoption of these policies may result in non-cashable gains such as reduced emissions, increased energy security, development of local businesses, community development, increased climate change resilience, improved well-being of the residents, and reduced waste generation.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Council has risk management processes in place which already identify a number of strategic risks based upon their likelihood and impact. The risks relate to the services provided by the Council and how they might be impacted in certain scenarios and concentrate on tangible outcomes.
- 10.2 Ongoing work to mitigate the likelihood and impact means that the risks are reassessed on a regular basis to reflect changes in the environment and to help focus attention.
- 10.3 Climate change as a whole represents a significant risk which will influence all aspects of life. Current concerns include how changing weather conditions will increase extreme weather events including drought and flooding, impact on food and water security with the resultant knock on implications for healthcare and other support services as well as general infrastructure.
- 10.4 Adoption of this interim policy statement will reduce risks associated with a more inconsistent application of existing planning policies, which may otherwise arise.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. None for the purpose of this report.
- 11.2. The implementation of the policies will require staff time from the Planning department.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. At a local level, health implications related to climate change, such as air quality, disproportionately impact the young, elderly and disabled are at risk groups.
- 12.2. At a global level the potential impacts apply to all groups.

13. CORPORATE PLAN and POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Council is legally and ethically required to create and protect a safer environment for all stakeholders.

14. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. None directly for the purposes of this report.

15. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. None directly for the purposes of this report.
- 15.2. Reductions in emissions and probable improvements in air quality and physical activity levels will have an indirect positive health and safety implication.
- 15.3. Enhancing the greenbelt, open spaces and biodiversity will improve the quality of life and well-being of the residents.
- 15.4. Building climate resilience will reduce the impacts of climate change such as droughts and floods, on the communities.

16. CONSULTATION ON DRAFT REPORT

- 16.1. A draft of the report was sent to the following on the following dates:

Consultee	Report sent	Comments rcvd
Heads of Services		
Executive Members		
Management Board		
Planning Committee		
Executive Briefing		